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BRIDGING THE GAP FROM SCHOOL TO WORK.
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HIGH RATES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE IN LOW-INCOME MINORITY GROUP FAMILIES, AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES KEEPS LARGER PROPORTIONS OF ITS CHILDREN IN SCHOOL LONGER THAN DOES ANY OTHER NATION, GIVE SOME INDICATION OF WHY THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROBLEM COMMANDS PUBLIC ATTENTION. SOME OF THE VARIABLES CONSIDERED TO AFFECT THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION, AND REQUIRING INTENSIVE REVIEW, ARE COUNSELING AND PLACEMENT BY SCHOOLS AND OTHER AGENCIES, WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS, OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION IN SCHOOLS, WORK-ORIENTED CURRICULUMS, SPECIFIC AND GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING, COOPERATIVE EDUCATION IN THIS COUNTRY WITH THAT EXPERIENCED IN EUROPE SUGGESTS THAT THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK GAP IN THE UNITED STATES IS LARGELY A RESULT OF THE HIGH EDUCATIONAL AND FLEXIBLE CAREER SIGHTS THAT HAVE BEEN SET WHILE AVAILABLE JOB OPPORTUNITIES HAVE NOT BEEN AT AS HIGH A LEVEL. WHILE RECOGNIZING AN INSUFFICIENCY OF RELEVANT RESEARCH, CERTAIN GENERAL CONCLUSIONS CAN BE REACHED ON THE BASIS OF PRESENT KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE CHARACTER OF THE STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK. AMONG THESE STEPS ARE (1) INCREASING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT OF WORK WHILE IN SCHOOL, (2) INCREASING OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO GAIN ACTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE, (3) INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF BUSINESS AND OTHER PRIVATE GROUPS IN THE EDUCATION WORLD, AND (4) PROVIDING IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING AT THE POINT OF ENTRY INTO THE JOB MARKET. THIS CHAPTER APPEARS IN "MANPOWER REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT AND REPORT ON MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS, RESOURCES, UTILIZATION, AND TRAINING" (1968) AVAILABLE AS VT 001 025. (ET)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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BRIDGING THE GAP FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

The persistence of high unemployment among young people throughout the Nation—despite the inauguration of new education, training, and job programs for youth—has led to public concern over the adequacy of the entire range of institutions that normally serve as bridges between school and work. A substantial review of the problem and much soul-searching have begun among all those in American life who have a responsibility for preparing youth for their adult activities of earning a living and raising families, or for helping them enter fields of work where they can acquire the wherewithal for productive and satisfying lives.

The problem of "bridging the gap" between school and work has been the subject of a special joint review by the Departments of Labor and of Health, Education, and Welfare pursuant to a Presidential directive in the *1967 Manpower Report*.[1] It played a substantial part in the report of the Advisory Council on Vocational Education, *Vocational Education, The Bridge Between Man and His Work*, issued early this year. The problem has also been under consideration by the Education Advisory Committee to the Appalachian Commission, and has been the subject of many technical discussions both in this country and among experts from nations of the free world meeting together at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

This chapter summarizes current knowledge concerning the many features of the school-to-work problem, the judgments and conclusions that have evolved, and the steps suggested to deal with the situation. It also discusses the need for further analysis which is being undertaken even while program action is being considered or going forward and which will bring to bear the growing knowledge arising out of both research and operating experience.

The Problem

The essence of the problem is reflected in the paradox that emerges from the following two propositions:

> —The United States keeps larger proportions of its children in school longer than does any other nation, to insure their preparation for lifetime activity.
>
> —Yet the unemployment rate among youth is far higher here than in any other industrial nation and had been rising sharply until the introduction of the Government's youth programs over the last 4 years.

Unemployment rates among youth, while highest for those in low-income minority group families, are substantially higher in all income groups

[1] See *1967 Manpower Report*, page XV.

than those considered desirable by any concept of acceptable unemployment rates that has been developed in our Nation. Thus, youth in the 14- to 19-year-old bracket from families with incomes of less than $3,000 have unemployment rates of 17.4 percent, an extraordinarily high level. But even youth from families with incomes of $10,000 and over have unemployment rates of 7.7 percent—rates that are about double the national average and quadruple the rates of adults.[2]

The differentials between youth and adult unemployment rates have persisted despite marked improvements in the overall employment situation. Examination of the character and dimensions of youth programs undertaken in the last 4 years, of the rise in youth unemployment rates before that, and of the demographic and economic factors at work suggests that the introduction of these special programs has been a key factor in keeping youth unemployment rates from rising even further in relation to adult rates.

The pattern of high unemployment rates among youth has become more pronounced in recent years. Though some differential between adult and youth rates has existed for decades, the gap has widened with the passage of time. The unemployment rates for youth shown by the 1930 census were far lower than the youth rates today (or at any time during the postwar period). They were only slightly above adult rates—8.3 percent for the 14- to 19-year-old group compared with 5.2 percent overall. Both 1930 rates reflect predepression circumstances. (See chart 19.)

While unemployment rates give some indication of why the school-to-work problem commands public attention, they are by no means the sole indicator of its dimensions. Unemployment rates do not reflect discouraged abstention from the job market, underemployment, or frustrating occupational misfits that may lead to quits and unemployment—problems on which there is, as yet, no adequate information. It is known that the labor force participation of young people (about 50 percent for the 16- to 19-year-old group, compared with 62 percent for those aged 20 and over) has remained relatively unchanged in recent years, despite the increasing proportion of youth in school and the increasing number of young people who have been reaching working age. This finding undoubtedly reflects the general improvement in employment opportunities. It is possible that labor force participation of youth would actually increase if their desire for employment were matched by the availability of job openings.

Underemployment is another factor in the youth employment situation which is difficult to measure. One evidence of this is the extent to which young people are able to secure only part-time employment as a result of economic factors. In 1967, 9.4 percent of the teenage full-time labor force, 343,000 young people, were working part time for economic reasons, compared with a rate of only 2.9 percent for persons aged 20 and over.[3]

The youth for whom bridges to work are now most adequate are those with the intensive preparation provided by professional training at the college level or beyond. For them, careers are virtually assured and unemployment is at or very close to minimum levels. In fact, in many specialties there are numerous opportunities open for people with professional training. But sizable proportions of all other groups of youth—high school dropouts, high school graduates, and college dropouts—face serious uncertainties as they leave the academic world and begin the work for which school was to have prepared them.

The tremendous advantage college graduates have in entering the world of work can be seen from the unemployment rates for young adults. In March 1967, for example, 20- to 24-year-olds with a college degree had an unemployment rate of only 1.4 percent, compared with 5.3 percent for those with a high school diploma, and a completely unacceptable 10.5 percent for those who had completed only 8 years of school.

Vocational preparation at the secondary and postsecondary levels has been progressively strengthened, however, under the impetus of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. This act has made possible extensive improvements in both the quantity and quality of vocational education offerings, which should mean better job preparation for many youth.

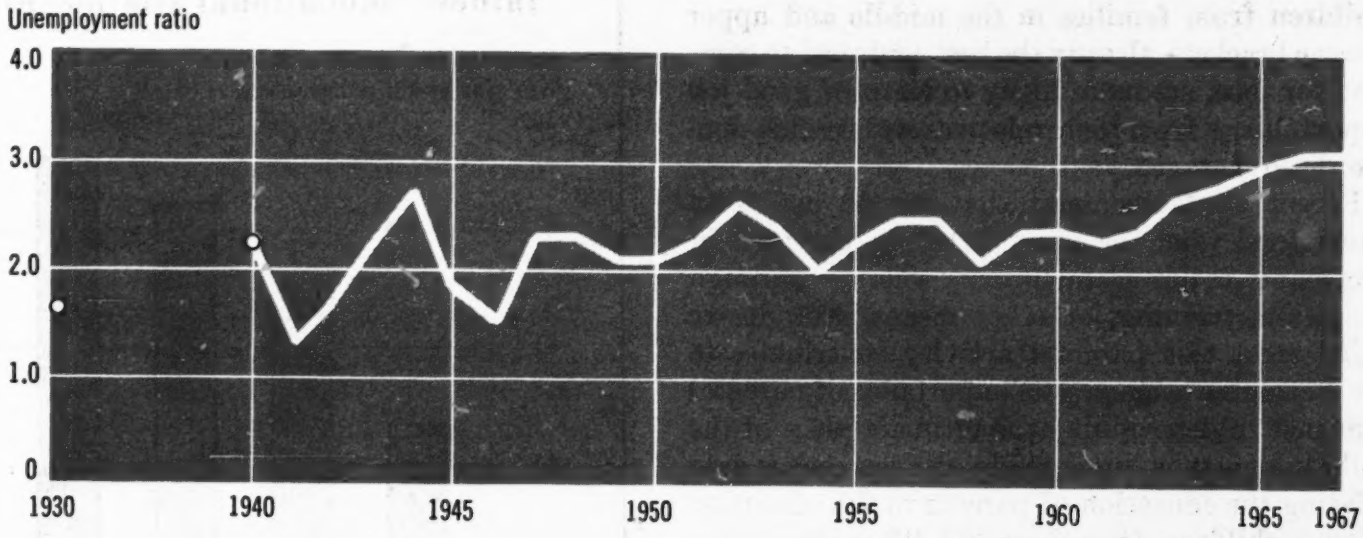
The problem of building bridges between school and work involves many fundamental elements in American life in addition to educational preparation. No one institution has or can have sole responsibility for helping youth to prepare for and make the transition from school to

[2] These data, the latest available on unemployment rates of teenagers by family income, are available only for teenagers 14 to 19 and relate to teenagers who were family members, other than head of the family, and were unemployed in March 1967. Family income is for 1966.

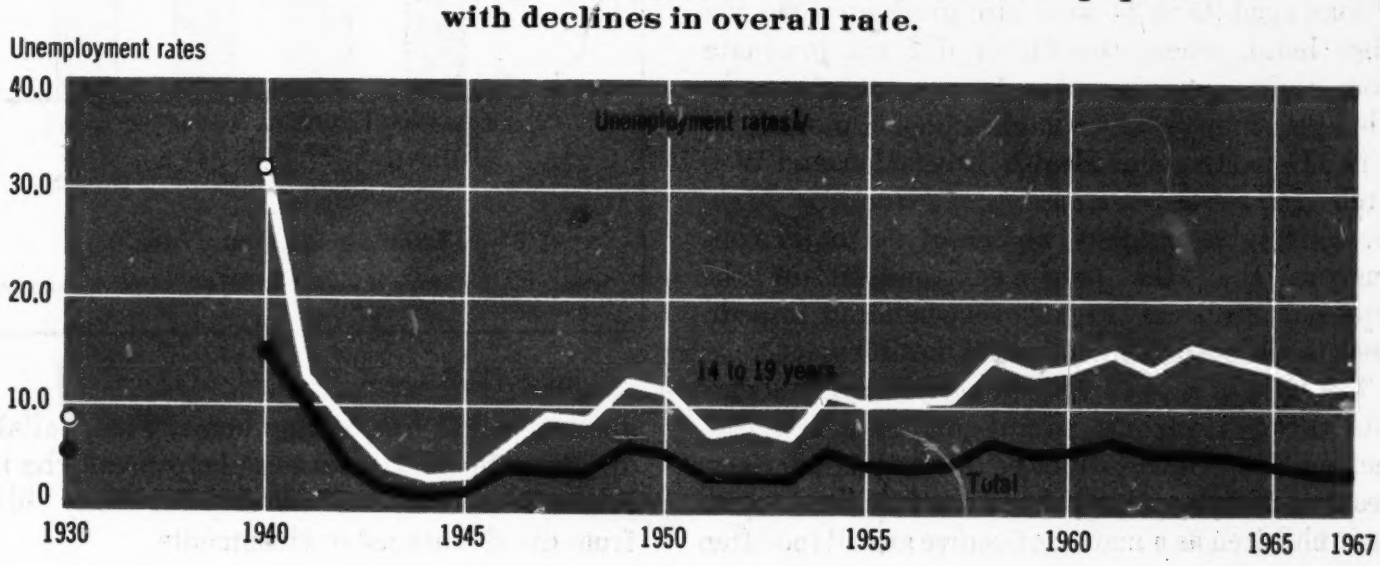
[3] The teenage full-time labor force is made up of youth, aged 16 to 19, who are working full time or looking for full-time work.

CHART 19

Ratio of teenage to overall unemployment has increased...



as declines in teenage unemployment rate have not kept pace with declines in overall rate.



1/ Pertains to population 14 years old and over.

Note: Fourteen and 15 year olds are included to maintain comparability with years prior to 1947. Rates for 1930 and 1940 are decennial census data. The 1941 estimates are October data. All other figures are annual averages. Data from 1930 to 1940 not available.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, based on data from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

work without unreasonable and discouraging spells of unemployment. Some young people get help from teachers; some get help from school counselors, especially "if they are college material" and will therefore cross into the work world with greater ease at a later point. Many are placed by the Employment Service system. Others get help from social workers, police, neighborhood centers, youth programs, or individual employers to whom they apply. Personal contact (through acquaintances, friends, and relatives), which has always been a strong feature of the job market in this country is one of the most frequent ways of finding jobs.

Parents play an important part in the process of transition (though perhaps less so today than in past years when children were more likely to follow in their parents' occupational footsteps). They are important not only in terms of their influence on the child's preparation for life, but also in terms of the contacts and associations they can open up in the bridge-crossing process. Their con-

tributions in this latter respect are necessarily limited when they themselves have been denied opportunity, through either outright discrimination or adverse educational or economic circumstance. Children from families in the middle and upper income brackets, already the best equipped to compete for jobs, are more likely to learn of good job opportunities from their relatives and friends than are disadvantaged youth.[4]

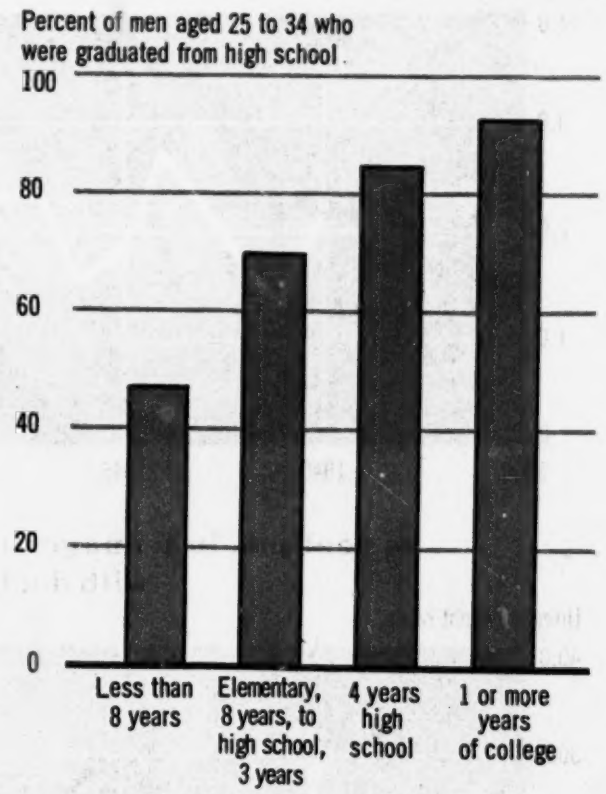
Recent studies suggest that we do not fully understand what the function of the parent is in preparing children for work, whether through education, training, or other means. Nor do we know what this parental activity contributes to the Nation's economy. The importance of parental influence in determining the ultimate place of the child in society is suggested by various census data relating the education of parents to the education of their children. (See chart 20.) Where the father had graduated from high school, about 87 percent of sons aged 25 to 34 were also graduates. On the other hand, where the father did not graduate from high school, less than 60 percent of sons in this age group received high school diplomas.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's 1966 report on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* also suggests, as one of its major conclusions, that the home environment of the deprived child can be an overwhelming impediment to his economic and social development.

The need to supplement the activities of the parents through various parent-surrogate activities such as Head Start cannot be overestimated. Services that middle and upper income families provide their children as a matter of course are all too often missing in the low-income home. The availability of adequate substitutes may help break the intergenerational chains of poverty for many children from disadvantaged environments.

CHART 20

Proportion of men who complete high school is directly related to their fathers' educational attainment.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, based on March 1962 data from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Ways of Improving the Transition Process

Perception of the school-work gap and of ways of bridging it is naturally colored by the vantage point from which it is regarded. Those involved with school administration have been concerned that the preparation given young people in school be improved so that it can ease their transition into work and reduce youth unemployment rates. Those in the manpower agencies concerned with the cadres of young people who continue to enter the labor force, from school systems that will require many years for improvement, think youth should be helped, where necessary, by new and special training facilities designed to equip them for available jobs. Those who work directly with youth in the process of transition—counseling and placing them as they graduate or drop out of school and advising them on job and training opportunities and on the special work and work-training programs open to them—are particularly con-

[4] For a further discussion on this problem, see the chapter on Barriers to Employment of the Disadvantaged.

cerned about improving the mechanics of the transition. Those involved with youth who are making the transition from rural to urban areas are concerned also with the problems of residence and cultural change and with the wide range of information on occupations needed by those who are leaving rural areas.

Indeed, a strong case can be made for a variety of approaches: (1) Improvements in the educational system and great expansion of cooperative education programs to prepare young people better; (2) special programs to take care of the approximately 6 million school dropouts expected to seek work opportunities without adequate preparation over the next decade; (3) improvements in the process of communicating occupational information to young people while they are in school and putting them in touch with jobs and additional training opportunities as they come out; and (4) improvements in early employment experience, by adding to this experience new opportunities to learn.

At the present time many high school graduates and dropouts do not receive any guidance or counseling. Eight out of 10 school dropouts have never had counseling by school or employment office officials about training or employment opportunities, and 4 out of 10 high school graduates have never had such counseling. (See table 1.) There are no school counselors at all in 13 percent of the Nation's secondary schools and in 90 percent of its elementary schools. And only Massachusetts and the Virgin Islands meet the Office of Education's basic standard of one counselor for every 300 students.

Even smaller proportions have been exposed to supervised work experience while in school. Among out-of-school youth in 1963, only 7 percent of high school graduates and 3 percent of dropouts had such work experience.[5]

The Employment Service's part-time, cooperative school program—under which regular Employment Service counselors come into the schools to test, counsel, and take applications from those not planning to go on to college—reaches about 50 percent of the high schools and about 75 percent of all high school seniors. Unfortunately, however,

[5] These statistics relate to cooperative educational arrangements between schools and industry. In addition, since 1963, the Neighborhood Youth Corps has provided hundreds of thousands of part-time employment opportunities to poor children to enable them to remain in school. For a discussion of the NYC program, see the chapter on New Developments in Manpower Programs.

TABLE 1. PROPORTION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS WHO HAD RECEIVED JOB GUIDANCE OR COUNSELING [1]

Receipt of job guidance or counseling	Percent distribution	
	Dropouts	Graduates
Total	100.0	100.0
Received guidance	22.4	56.1
School counseling only	17.1	37.8
Employment service only	4.2	4.9
School and employment service	1.0	13.4
Never received guidance	77.6	43.9

[1] Data relate to persons 16 to 21 years of age in February 1963 who were no longer in school, were not college graduates, and were in the civilian noninstitutional population.

NOTE: Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

it reaches a much smaller proportion of the students who drop out of school, and in many cases the degree of contact with the outgoing student is far too superficial.

In addition, occupational information reaches only a small proportion of students below the senior high school level. And visual occupational materials (films, calendars with pictures depicting occupations, etc.) still need a great deal of improvement. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook*—the Government's basic guide to occupational opportunities—should be made readily available to youth in junior high school. It is of particular importance that those youth most in need of guidance concerning job and training opportunities—the high school and junior high school dropouts—be made aware of the realities of the world of work. Proper guidance for these youth at an earlier age would promote the dual objectives of encouraging them to remain in school while helping those who are determined to drop out in spite of the odds against them.

Some notable attempts have been made to give more personalized and intensive counseling to individuals, as in schools that provide a full range of guidance services beginning at seventh grade, in the skill centers financed under the MDTA, and in the efforts of the Employment Service to deal with potential dropouts at several continuation schools. These experiences suggest that, with improved guidance materials available throughout

the junior and senior high schools and intensive work by counselors knowledgeable about the practical employment situation existing for students coming out of school, some inroads can be made into present youth unemployment rates. These experiences also point to the overwhelming importance of full cooperation and joint action by the local education agencies and the local Employment Service.

Innovative experiences have also taken place under the Vocational Education Act and in special MDTA training courses that expose students to the realities of work life rather than merely to academic situations. The development of more cooperative education programs, even under academically oriented curriculums, has meant that increasing numbers are exposed to work situations that make abstractions come alive.

These experiences suggest that substantial improvements in educational curriculums and more linkages to the reality of the work world will help substantially to improve the preparation of youth. While advocates of general or college-bound preparation still argue with those who want to see more work content introduced throughout the school curriculum, there is growing agreement on several points: (1) That curriculums can generally be enriched by material drawn from real work situations; (2) that all students should be given much more information concerning career paths and opportunities, and much earlier than is now usual; and (3) that the vocational school program should offer opportunities for students with a far wider range of interests and abilities to try out vocationally oriented curriculums and go on not only to jobs but also, increasingly, to higher education—either directly or after periods of employment. In any case, the secondary education system in this country must strive to reach the point at which all youth who receive a high school diploma but do not go on to further education are adequately equipped to find and keep a meaningful job.

There have also been suggestions on other points that need further exploration. It has been proposed, for example, that the schools themselves assume increased responsibility for the actual job placement of their graduates. The exercise of such responsibility would expose the schools to industry and should result in improved and more realistic curriculums and guidance services. It is argued that it makes no more sense for the schools to be unconcerned about what happens to their graduates than it does for an automobile manufacturer to pay no attention to the sales of his products.

How this concern is reflected in new programs becomes an important matter. The Government's manpower services are already coping with some of the problems of transition by finding jobs for young people through the facilities of the Employment Service (in particular, through the Youth Opportunity Centers and the Cooperative School Program), as well as by projecting the future needs of the economy and its occupations as a base for educational, training, and curriculum planning. A potentially serious problem in having the schools handle placements is that the knowledge of job opportunities required for a satisfactory placement extends far beyond a school district or even a labor area, and calls for the information network available to the Employment Service system. Furthermore, the Government is inevitably concerned about problems of duplication and coordination that might result from newly awakened realizations of need, at a time when there are already recognized shortages of qualified personnel in both the schools and the manpower services.

Solutions to this range of problems by cooperative effort between school systems and Employment Service offices have been worked out in a number of cases and can be carried further, as they have been in other countries such as Sweden and Great Britain. In Sweden, the school system and the employment service each finances half of the cost associated with youth placement activities. In Great Britain, a cooperative relationship has been developed over many years, with responsibility allocated for both guidance and actual job placement. As part of this program, a special Youth Employment Service has been created to deal with youth both in school and as they come out seeking jobs.

Experiences of Other Nations

The problem of youth unemployment in this country takes on added dimension when contrasted with the situation in Europe—a contrast in many ways revealing, but also in many ways deceptive.

Unemployment rates for youth in other nations, particularly the western industrialized nations, are for the most part noticeably lower than for youth in this country. Sweden and France, for example, have youth unemployment rates one-half to two-thirds lower than the American rates. English rates are far below the American ones. While part of this difference can be attributed to a generally tighter European labor situation, a major factor is the highly developed man-job matching apparatus. The youth employment situation in these countries is apparently characterized by a relatively quick entry of youth into jobs following school, an extensive training structure, and a great variety of "apprenticeable" trades through which youth can make a start in the world of work.

In assessing these seeming successes, one should keep in mind that there are some basic structural differences between these countries and the United States—a fact that makes it very difficult to choose what would work as well here. For one thing, the percentage of youth receiving vocational education is much higher in Europe than in the United States, where in 1963–64 only about 19 percent of the 14- to 17-year-olds received vocational education. This contrasts to a range among countries recently studied by the Department of Labor, which begins at 21 percent (of the 14- to 17-year-olds) in the Netherlands and extends up to 58 percent (of the 15- to 17-year-olds) in West Germany.

These figures reflect a heavily structured status system for entry into jobs—the kind of system that has been traditionally rejected in the United States. Here, the ultimate educational goal—still not fully realized—is to open the broadest and highest level of opportunity for everyone. But this goal is far from being accepted in the countries of Europe. This very aspect of the European practice, moreover, is now a source of dissatisfaction in the European nations themselves. Serious review is underway in several countries with respect to their educational systems, what they lead to, the limited opportunities they afford to youth, and the limited lifetime real incomes that result. Part of this review has been occasioned by concern over inadequate economic growth and the inability of the nations to cope with U.S. and other foreign drains upon their professional and technical manpower resources.

Contrast with the European situation, perhaps more than any other single factor, suggests that the school-to-work gap in the United States is the result in part of the high educational and flexible career sights that have been set here. The contrast also points up the general failure—as reflected at least in the U.S. teenage unemployment rates—to bring reality to as high a level. This means that the essential task posed by the school-to-work problem in the United States is how to create a bridge that would bring youth into jobs more directly, and thus reduce their unemployment rates to acceptable levels. But the problem also involves getting them into jobs that are not below their potential, that are not routine jobs into which they are forced for lack of any alternative. The problem is how to make real the now unfulfilled promise of the American educational and opportunity systems.

The much higher educational sights for youth here than abroad are reflected dramatically in the differences in how long youth attend school. In the United States nearly 94 percent of all 14- to 17-year-olds are in school, as compared with a range of 56 to 65 percent for the same age group in several European countries. In recent years, however, a number of these countries have planned to raise the age level for compulsory education. Austria has introduced a ninth year of required schooling; Belgium plans to extend its school-leaving age to 16 by 1968; and Sweden recently extended schooling to age 16. France is lengthening required schooling from age 14 to age 16 as of 1968, and the French Planning Commission envisions that, by 1970, 40 percent of all 17-year-olds will be in school. The United Kingdom is also contemplating an extension from 15 to 16 years of age.

Along with much earlier ages of entry into employment, Europe has created a markedly different wage structure for youth than for adults, as discussed later. But keeping these basic differences in mind, there is still benefit to be gained by sifting the various approaches to the transition problem existing in these countries. Following are summaries of a few of these approaches in the various

areas that have a critical impact on the school-to-work transition.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Where vocational guidance is most extensively practiced in Europe, the manpower agency has a key role. In Sweden, the Government instituted a national program of vocational guidance and training in 1947. And in the 1950's most of the larger local employment service offices provided guidance for persons under 18 years of age in special youth departments, which also were responsible for placements. Since then guidance and placement functions have been largely separated. Beginning in the sixth grade, teacher-counselors with special training provided by the National Labor Market Board assist young people in choosing a career. Their services in the schools are funded 50 percent by county school boards and 50 percent by county labor boards—demonstrating the close cooperation between the educational authorities and the manpower agencies in preparing young people for work.

The Swedish program also provides for prevocational practical orientation in the eighth year of school. This involves a 3-week period of observation and work for pupils, who visit plants and business establishments to become acquainted with the conditions they may expect to encounter in their future careers, and to obtain a basis of personal experience for their career choice.

In West Germany all vocational guidance is carried out by the Federal employment service and its local agencies. In 1966 more than 84 percent of the school leavers received individual counseling. Where training in the chosen occupation is not locally available, a vocational guidance service can provide youth with financial assistance to go where training is given.

In the United Kingdom, talks to groups of students by the Youth Employment Officer, who works for the Youth Employment Service, begin in the 4th year of secondary school. The system of informing students about vocational matters also includes evening lectures by visiting speakers and the use of career displays.

In Austria, there are three sources of vocational counseling services—trade unions, employers, and the government. There is a central Government youth placement office with a special section for vocational counseling. In cooperation with school authorities, these vocational counseling services establish contacts with youth in the schools.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The character of vocational education varies considerably among European countries. Small countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden find vocational education in school best suited to prepare youth for work, while larger countries with more diversified production, such as Western Germany and the United Kingdom, find in-plant training better suited to their needs.

Perhaps the most significant recent trend in vocational education in Europe is that the training is becoming broader. Training for a "spectrum" of jobs has been proposed in the United Kingdom. While much of Europe has traditionally used formal apprenticeship in its training of skilled workers, the present trend is toward a broader, general educational background and wider, less specialized training. This educational pattern, designed to help workers adjust to the skill demands of modern industry, is much closer to the American approach of general training applicable to different kinds of jobs.

YOUTH WAGE POLICY

Differentials between youth and adult wages are common in Europe, whereas wage differentials based on the worker's youth alone are virtually unknown in the United States.

Among those countries for which information was recently obtained by the Department of Labor are Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. These countries have a variety of wage scales for young workers, usually in particular industries and occupations, which are lower than those for adult workers. The so-called "youth wages," where established, are generally well accepted by employers, unions, parents, and workers.

Most collective agreements in Belgium provide for lower wages for persons under 21. Only by way

of exception do some agreements provide for equal pay for equal work regardless of age.

The French legal minimum wage provides for reductions applicable to workers under 18 years of age, according to the following scale:

Age group	Percent reductions from regular minimum wage, 1964
14 to 15	50
15 to 16	40
16 to 17	30
17 to 18	20

In the Netherlands, individual industry agreements set lower rates for young people. Different wage rates apply for each year of age from 14 to the specified adult level, which varies according to the industry. For example, the wage for a Job Class I adult worker, aged 23, in the metal industry in 1964 was f 1.79 an hour. The rates for young workers between 14 and 22 years of age in the same job ranged from f 0.48 to f 1.65. At 18 years of age, the rate was f 0.90 an hour.

In Sweden, special wages for youth in the 16- to 23-year-old range are established through collective bargaining. The wages vary according to the person's age, sex, skill, the industry, and the cost of living. The minimum wages set by the various wage councils in the United Kingdom provide for lower pay rates for young workers—usually from ages 15 to 21 for males and 15 to 18 for females. The specified youth rates increase up to those for adults by yearly or, in some cases, biannual steps.

Some Further Questions

A wide range of additional questions bearing on the school–work transition requires intensive review.

An important one that needs to be resolved is the extent to which the present youth unemployment situation results from an unusually high rate of youth entrance into the labor force. There is some evidence, for example, that the proportion of new young entrants in the labor force may be greater here than in European countries, and that this has some bearing on the wide differences in youth unemployment rates between this country and Western Europe. But even if this proves to be the case, the implications for the problem at hand will still need exploration. It has been suggested that the numbers of American youth reaching school-leaving age may be greater than the economy can absorb. Whether this is a question of relative numbers of youth and jobs, or of the kinds of preparation that youth must undergo, or what special measures and special kinds of training may be needed is an important matter to resolve.

A related question is the extent to which the present situation partially reflects the reduction of low-skilled or entry jobs in the United States, particularly when compared with the situation in Europe. Careful technical observers of U.S. plants and those in western European countries have often commented upon the relatively large proportions of unskilled labor in many European plants. Whether this factor would make any difference in entry opportunities for youth, given a growth in the *number* of jobs open to young people, is a matter that requires further investigation. The answer to this question may be particularly significant in throwing light on the methods needed to solve the school-work problem in the United States, in contrast to the solutions that have existed in Europe under a different and—in terms of the United States level of productivity—an outmoded stage of technological development.

The technology question is, of course, closely related to questions that are frequently raised regarding the extent to which the youth employment problem might be a reflection of the increasing minimum wage level in the United States. This matter has already been reviewed to some extent but needs further exploration.

The analysis that has been made to date indicates quite clearly that the minimum wage alone cannot be held responsible for the high rates of youth unemployment. What is needed is an exploration of the degree, however slight, to which the minimum wage may contribute to the problem; and, to the extent that this is the case, whether there are in fact any practical possibilities of meeting the problem through wage action.

In the U.S. economy, generally rising wage levels have both reflected and spurred productivity gains, which are usually achieved by paring man hours per unit of output through more effective utilization of manpower and the introduction of more efficient equipment. In the analysis done to date, it has been found difficult to separate the ef-

fects of the minimum wage from the entire process by which productivity and wage levels have moved upward together. The minimum wage is only one aspect—and a minor one—of a complex process which needs a great deal of further analysis. In fact, increases in minimum wages have generally trailed behind increases in the general wage level. As productivity and wages rise, routine or low productivity jobs—some of them held by youth—are often eliminated. This is, however, a process affecting the entire economy, where the great majority of workers have wages far above the minimum. In fact, in most parts of the country, particularly in urban job markets, the wages of large proportions of young or beginning workers are already at or above the minimum wage level.

Further examination of this question will call for the application of more sophisticated methods of separating the foregoing factors than have been feasible thus far. Such methods are needed for analysis of the kinds of jobs youth hold, of the possibility of expanding the number of such jobs under circumstances of generally rising productivity, of the desirability of doing this, and of trends in employment and job orders.

Such an analysis should be directed especially at the practical possibilities for opening jobs in the future. It is essential to be realistic about the extent to which changes in wage levels alone would significantly increase jobs available to youth in an economy with other strong forces at work, such as the hiring standards of employers, the constantly rising levels of wages, and wage and promotional expectations. Particularly important would be an examination of the circumstances under which such opportunities could be developed—whether adjustments in youth wage levels would, by themselves, have an appreciable effect upon the development of youth jobs or whether additional special incentives would have to be provided. Consideration should be given, for example, to payment of training costs, and the further extension of cooperative school-work programs linking education and work experience.

These latter programs, where established, have often led to the successful placement of young people in employment and have given youth the opportunity to explore different types of job possibilities while still in school, rather than through an uncertain search for jobs after school. However, the numbers of students in such programs have been rather small thus far. And a review is now underway of the factors that have limited this type of program—including problems arising in the schools, in achieving industry acceptance, relating to competition with other workers, and resulting from laws and administrative arrangements that limit the employment of youth.

Exploration is needed also concerning the policies, practices, and attitudes of American employers toward the hiring of youth. In a cost-conscious economy, it is likely that increasing proportions of employers have become accustomed to accepting into employment only workers judged to be sufficiently mature, experienced, and capable of "carrying their weight" in a productive activity. Only recently, as the Nation's urban crises have escalated, have employers begun to review their policies in this regard, and to reassess their role with respect to employment of people who—whether because of youth or of other disadvantages—are regarded as not being able to carry their full load, temporarily or permanently. It now appears that it may be increasingly necessary to finance the special costs of training and preparation that employers would have to undertake in employing people who do not meet their established standards. But it is by no means clear what this means with respect to the incentives, if any, that may be needed to induce employers to employ inexperienced youth in sufficiently large numbers to erase the heavy problems of youth unemployment.

Employers in the United States rely heavily on the school system to educate young people in basic skills presumed to be needed for work and—except for the small group of apprentices—do little to insure that the schools actually prepare students for the world of work. They respect the competence and independence of educators, though they often complain about the products they get from the schools.

Schools and employers at this point have similar value systems. The student who drops out, gets low grades, or gets in trouble with the police is in trouble both in school and in getting a job. This creates a circular process: when schools and plant employment offices close doors, they also help to break down self-confidence, and this, in turn, makes it difficult for a youth to overcome the special barriers he faces. Emplcyers naturally prefer experienced and mature youth. High school graduation and school achievement records, as well as minimum age requirements, are generally used for

sorting out those who, it is assumed, would not be satisfactory workers. Fragmentary evidence from Employment Service orders indicates that jobs in the United States are as tightly closed to youth on the basis of chronological age as they are to older persons. Whether better methods can be found for judging and developing maturity (a matter that is becoming more and more important in approaches to training) and overcoming lack of experience is an additional question that needs exploration.

Much further study is needed, as well, of the kinds of preparation given to youth, in relation to the kinds of jobs they actually obtain. At this point, data on the relation of education to later work experience are limited to the general relationships between levels of education, parental support, and lifetime or eventual earning capacity. There is as yet no valid information on the more subtle relationships important for the development of public policy and programs—between amount and quality of schooling, kinds of curriculum, and extent of counseling or guidance, on the one hand, and success in overcoming the initial hurdles to job entry on the other. To some extent the longitudinal studies of school and work experience now being sponsored by the Department of Labor, under the Manpower Development and Training Act, and other studies sponsored by the Office of Education will illuminate this question. But more detailed analysis of linkages between particular kinds of school experience and first entry into the job market will be needed.

Whether high unemployment rates for youth will continue because youth is trying out, and can afford to try out, a variety of jobs is another question to be explored. Past explanations of high youth unemployment have often tended to emphasize the "trying out" character of the process. Clearly, job quits contribute to youth unemployment to some degree, but such "voluntary" unemployment in itself needs further assessment. To the extent that this reflects youth searching for job experience, the question might well be raised whether this searching—and the development of realistic expectations concerning the need for preparation—could not be made a part of the education process. At present, this searching occurs at a time when young people are on their own and their education is presumed to have been completed. The in-and-out process between education and work now takes place only in a limited number of situations, such as the Antioch plan.

At the high school level, it would be useful also to gage the impact of part-time employment, while the youth is in school, on his ability to adjust to regular employment once he is out of school. Perhaps a more extensive program of part-time jobs for youth who are in school but who do not plan to pursue higher education would be fruitful, building upon the findings and achievements of the Neighborhood Youth Corps' in-school program. Programs of this kind should provide valuable work experience and make the youth more aware of the intricacies of the job-finding process—an awareness which should prove useful to him when he is seeking full-time work after leaving school. In addition, the experience a youth gains on a part-time job makes it more likely that an employer will hire him for full-time employment.

An examination is needed also of the extent to which initial job tryouts by youth reflect inefficiencies in the way they seek jobs and in the various institutions and agencies that help them, rather than "inevitable" dissatisfactions with particular job opportunities. To some extent, it is the present high family income levels in the United States, compared to those in other countries and in generations gone by, that permit many youth the luxury of "shopping around" and trying out jobs. Related to this question, of course, is the need for an assessment of the extent to which "disenchantment with work" plays a role in youth unemployment rates and for an examination of the particular groups in the population to whom this factor is applicable.

Also needed is an examination of the extent to which youth unemployment rates could be reduced by spreading high school graduations over the year. At the present time 97 percent of high school graduates in the United States leave school within the same 2 or 3 weeks in June. The heavy load that this puts upon public and private employment offices and upon the personnel offices of companies might well be diminished, and greater inroads made into youth unemployment rates, if the load were spread throughout the year. There has been little realization or awareness of the extent to which the adjustment of high school schedules over the last few generations has resulted, more and more, in uniform graduation times and has perhaps contributed to the youth unemployment problem. There has been no exploration of the practical possibilities of reversing this process, nor

of the extent to which such reversal might help in alleviating youth unemployment.

Beyond the explorations discussed above, there are a number of further questions that need to be considered:

1. From the standpoint of the immediate employment of students not going to college, as well as their adaptability to occupational changes over their work careers, which kinds of curriculums are most effective?

2. How much and what kinds of direct individualized help in making an occupational choice and in finding a job do students need while in school, and as they leave?

3. To what extent can the transition be eased by school curriculum changes and by increasing the knowledge about the work environment youth have while in school?

4. What are the present "world of work" curriculums and to what extent do they reach those who will not be going to college?

5. What do freshmen, and also seniors, in high school know about the kinds of jobs available—how much they pay, what are the opportunities for advancement, what is the economy of their community based on, what services are offered by the Employment Service, and so on?

6. Which schools in the United States provide instruction on the nature of the local economy, the jobs available and what they are like? Which ones are good examples that might be used as prototypes for this purpose? And what success have they had?

7. How much contact do students have with industry? To what extent are there arrangements for visits to plants and lectures from plant officials? How significant and useful would these be?

8. What is the role of industry in the training process? This role is now under significant development as announced by the President in his special message to the Congress on January 23 and under additional exploration by the Task Force on Occupational Training of the Departments of Labor and of Commerce.

Conclusions

Many of the matters discussed have been under review in the joint study undertaken by the Departments of Labor and of Health, Education, and Welfare. While it is recognized that a great many of the factors mentioned need much further exploration, certain general conclusions can be reached on the basis of present knowledge concerning the character of the steps that can be taken to narrow the gap between school and work:

Increasing knowledge about the environment of work while in school

1. We can insure that every schoolchild has more knowledge about the world of work than is now the case.

—Preparation for occupational selection should begin not later than the junior high school level because of the social, emotional, and physical changes taking place in the students at this time. This should be a process of increasing knowledge—not of forcing premature decisions.

—There is need for professional and subprofessional counseling far beyond that which now exists, curriculum revision and new curriculum materials to begin the process of world-of-work exposure, and vast expansion of knowledge about work through teaching aids, television, or direct exposure to real-life occupational situations.

2. Whatever one concludes about the merits of broad versus occupationally oriented education, it is clear that more occupational curriculums offered at high school and post-high school levels should be expanded. These curriculums should be based on the "broad cluster" concept, as part of broad-based education, to permit both the opening of more options than are now available and the prospect of career ladders in these options.

Increasing opportunity for young people in school to gain actual work experience

1. Even before entry into the job market, the student should have maximum opportunity to explore his abilities and preferences in the real world. The tryout period should take place during school years rather than afterward. There should be a vast expansion of cooperative work opportunities that will open new horizons. Work experience, in fact, should become a meaningful part

of preparation for career development and life at several stages of youth—not only at the final professional internship stage. The interaction of classroom instruction and practical exposure should be planned to develop the highest level of capacity possible for each young person at the time of his entry into the job market, whenever that occurs. These work activities should be accompanied by supportive counseling—the kind of counseling that may well be the most important in the practical process of launching youth on a career.

2. The great desire of young people to be involved in meaningful activities in our Nation should be matched by expanded development of opportunities for voluntary service, both during school years and afterward. Academic credit should be given for such activity, and the Nation's voluntary organizations should be assisted to develop such opportunity.

Increasing participation of business and other private groups in the education world

1. There should be vastly more involvement of people from the working world (businessmen, supervisors, labor officials, professionals, and Employment Service and other public servants) in the process of education—through exchanges of various kinds, or simply the direct contribution of the time of personnel.

2. There should be vastly more two-way interchange—especially over summers or other vacation times—between professionals in the world of education and the world of industry and employment.

3. There is a need for industry to develop new forms of training, and new kinds of training for supervisors, in the techniques of introducing young people—including disadvantaged and minority youth—into the new world of work. For too many youth, this world is one of unsympathetic supervisors and fellow workers. Such programs could involve educational upgrading in plants, placing school personnel in plants, and use of various forms of educational release time, with resultant lessening of dependence on school classrooms as the sole places of organized instruction.

Improved knowledge and training at the point of entry into the job market

1. At the point of entry into the job market, whenever that may be, the student should have access to a full range of skills supporting his placement, with adequate time devoted to his individual case, and with supporting personal contact continuing through several months of initial job placement, where necessary.

2. The full range of manpower services should include supplementary training and job experience of whatever kind is necessary to insure successful entry into the job market. In many areas, especially isolated ones, residential facilities will be required to collect a student group of sufficient size to warrant a full range of offerings.

3. The time of entry into the job market can be delayed, with profit to the individual and a reduction in youth unemployment, if adequate training bridges are provided (of which the current Department of Defense pilot efforts are examples).

Finally, two broad considerations that affect all of the foregoing

1. Putting the Nation's secondary schools on a year-round basis, and having their graduates enter the job market in three or four groups rather than all at once, would make the process of absorption much easier.

2. The efforts undertaken should be directed at *all* of the Nation's youth—so that efforts to build better bridges for the youth of poverty families, for example, will be part of efforts that reach all youth who each year line up at the inadequate bridgeheads.

On February 5, 1968, the President transmitted to the Congress a message on education entitled "The Fifth Freedom." In that message, the President called for the enactment of The Partnership for Learning and Earning Act of 1968, which has been introduced in the Congress. This new act would do much to streamline and strengthen our vocational education laws. "Above all," the President stated, "we must build stronger links between the schools and their students, and local industries and employment services, so that education will have a direct relationship to the world the graduating student enters."

The new act would provide $15 million for special experimental programs to bridge the gap between education and work, to build alliances between schools, employment services, and private employers; and provide new summer training programs combining work and education. This legislation would enable experimentation in devising solutions to the kinds of problems discussed above. Through these experiments we can look forward to creating models for broad application throughout the Nation.